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THE U.S.-JAPAN SECURITY ALLIANCE: WELCOMING A NEW JAPAN

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ABSTRACT

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The stability of the Asia-Pacific region is of critical importance to the national interests of both Japan and the United States. This stability is now challenged by new threats associated with North Korea, Taiwan, and China. The U.S.-Japan security alliance has evolved as the cornerstone of regional stability and remains the best mechanism by which the world's two leading economies can pursue overlapping national interests. Recently, the U.S. and Japanese governments have made remarkable progress toward reconfiguring the alliance. However, the materialization of a New Japan, one that assumes a more prominent role in its self-defense, regional stability, and global influence, along with full implementation of the transformational changes for the alliance, requires mustering popular support for an unprecedented revision of Japan's constitution and, more specifically, Article 9. The future of the alliance will depend upon the popular vote of the Japanese people reflecting their view of how critical the *Japan-U.S.* security alliance is to securing Japan's national interests.

THE U.S.-JAPAN SECURITY ALLIANCE: WELCOMING A NEW JAPAN

The stability of the Asia-Pacific region is of critical importance to the economic, diplomatic, and political interests of both Japan and the United States. In the post-Cold War era, this stability is challenged by new and emergent threats that are very different from those that defined the superpower standoff of the Cold War. The threats are numerous and diverse; however, three sources of tension represent the most likely and gravest threat to regional stability: North Korea, Taiwan, and China. North Korea is determined to guarantee its security through the pursuit of a contentious nuclear weapons program, not to mention its potential proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and continued support of terrorism. A democratic Taiwan desires to maintain its national identity, while China seeks the reunification of Taiwan through peaceful or, if necessary, forceful means. And finally, many analysts believe that China's rapid ascent to military prominence fueled by robust economic growth threatens the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region.

The U.S.-Japan security alliance, originally established to provide for Japan's security and for unrestricted U.S. access to key military bases and installations in Japan, evolved throughout the Cold War to become the cornerstone of regional stability. For Japan, the alliance is critical not only for the defense of the home islands but also for meeting Tokyo's own strategic priorities, including achieving the security of its sea lines of communication.[1] Washington views the alliance as "the best means to maintain preeminence"[2] and securing its national interests in East Asia. Therefore, the U.S.-Japan security alliance remains the best mechanism by which the two leading economies in the world can pursue overlapping national interests that depend upon a stable and secure Asia-Pacific region.

Popular support for the alliance is at or near record levels on both sides of the Pacific according to recent surveys. In the United States, the *2005 Image of Japan Study* conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan determined that 72 percent of the U.S. general public considers Japan a dependable ally – a record level for this study dating back to 1989.[3] Likewise, 90 percent of opinion leaders in the U.S. (representing federal government, large business, organized labor, the media, academia, and organized religion) consider Japan a dependable ally – just down from a record 91 percent in 2004.[4] In addition, 86 percent of the general public and 83 percent of opinion leaders responded that the treaty should be maintained.[5] With very similar results, 86 and 82 percent of the general public and opinion leaders, respectively, believed that the importance of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty to U.S. security interests was either "very important" or "somewhat important."[6]

As demonstrated by survey data compiled by the Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, the Japanese public has displayed consistent support for the U.S.-Japan alliance since 1978. Published on a three-year periodicity, the most recent data from 2003 indicated that 73.4 percent of the Japanese public considered the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty to be beneficial, while only 13.2 percent of respondents considered it not beneficial to the security of Japan.[7] When questioned as to what would be the best way to ensure Japan's security, 72.1 percent of the Japanese public supported maintaining the existing U.S.-Japan security framework and the Self-Defense Forces (SDF), while only 13.0 percent supported scrapping the alliance with the U.S. in support of other security options.[8]

Japanese citizens who criticize the U.S.-Japan security alliance view the security arrangement as the avenue through which the U.S. pressures Japan to become entangled in conflicts that do not necessarily serve its national interests.[9] However, if popular opinion polls are to be believed, it would seem that this viewpoint has been marginalized. Even though public support for the U.S.-Japan alliance remains strong, it has been challenged by domestic discontent in Japan originating from local government and community complaints concerning noise, safety, environmental impact, and monetary compensation for supporting U.S. bases and facilities in Japan. Ironically, even though Japan more fully recognizes the values and benefits of the U.S.-Japan security alliance, the Japanese public is growing more reluctant to bear the burden of host nation support for forward-deployed U.S. forces.[10] Local Japanese domestic discontent, if not addressed, has the potential to paralyze the alliance. Therefore, in order for the alliance to remain relevant and able to withstand external threats in the diverse security environment of the Asia-Pacific region, the bilateral partners must focus on easing the burden on local Japanese communities so as to not erode the foundation of unprecedented public support for the alliance.

Since February 2005, the U.S. and Japanese governments have made remarkable progress toward reconfiguring the alliance thus greatly accelerating its evolutionary progress. Transformational changes include more robust roles, missions, and capabilities for Japan, significantly improved contingency planning and interoperability between Japanese and American forces, and a major realignment of forward-deployed U.S. forces. However, the materialization of a New Japan, one that assumes a more prominent role in its self-defense, regional stability, and global influence, along with full implementation of the transformational changes for the alliance, requires mustering popular support for an unprecedented revision of Japan's constitution. Not amended since its ratification in 1947, Japan's constitution, and specifically Article 9, is interpreted as prohibiting Japan's right to collective self-defense and

renounces the military and use of force to settle international disputes. Gaining popular support for the constitutional changes that will (1) establish the SDF as a military force to secure Japan's peace and independence and (2) enable Japan to assume a more robust and proactive role in the U.S.-Japan security alliance may prove to be a significant undertaking considering the national debate currently ensuing over constitutional revision. But, it is not insurmountable. The future of the alliance will depend upon the popular vote of the Japanese people reflecting their view of how critical the *Japan-U.S.* security alliance is to securing Japan's national interests.

Evolutionary Change

In the aftermath of World War II in the Pacific Theater, the United States and the Asian nations that had suffered at the hand of the Japanese Empire wanted to ensure that Japan's remilitarization was controlled by the civilian population and conducted under the close watch of the U.S. government following the withdrawal of U.S. occupation forces. As such, the United States offered Japanese leaders a bilateral security agreement that was codified in a treaty signed in 1952. In accordance with the treaty, the Japanese leaders agreed that the U.S. could continue unrestricted use of Japanese facilities and military bases following the post-war occupation and granted the U.S. the exclusive administrative rights to the island of Okinawa.[11] However, the agreement fell short of formally declaring that the United States would defend Japan in the event of an attack due to Japan's inability to contribute militarily. [12] The security agreement, established to provide for the security of Japan and in the interest of maintaining regional stability in the Western Pacific, experienced an incremental evolution and transformed from an alliance of Japanese dependency on American security to a partnership of more equally shared responsibility.

The original security treaty was not a traditional bilateral alliance in the sense that the agreement did not provide mutual military support for the participating parties. Japan's support to U.S. military operations was only required to defend against an attack on the Japanese homeland.[13] In fact, Japan interpreted Article 9 of its constitution to prohibit any commitments of the Self-Defense Force (SDF) beyond repelling a belligerent invasion of its territorial sovereignty.[14] The original treaty was revised in the 1960 Security Treaty Revision that served as the catalyst for the "evolution of the alliance from a one-sided relationship of dependence toward a more balanced and mature relationship of shared responsibility."[15] In pursuit of the new treaty, the Japanese sought (1) to obtain a written commitment from the United States to defend Japan against an attack and (2) to constrain unrestricted use of U.S. bases in Japan by initiating a requirement for prior consultation[16] – the right of Japan to veto major American

deployments into the country, operations from it, and major changes in U.S. equipment. Ratification of the treaty represented an important diplomatic victory for Japan and the prospect of a more equal and sustainable security alliance for the Eisenhower administration.[17] The requirement for prior consultation was significant in that Japan assumed a more proactive role in securing its shared national interests with the United States.

The alliance continued its evolution toward a more balanced sharing of responsibilities as the return of Okinawa to Japanese sovereignty was addressed in the late 1960s. During the prolonged negotiations, Japan requested the right of prior consultation for Okinawan facilities similar to that implemented for U.S. bases on mainland Japan.[18] The Nixon administration was sympathetic to Japan's request to revert Okinawa to Japanese sovereignty[19] due in large part to Japan's significant contributions to the U.S. effort in Vietnam.[20] However, the United States was concerned that Japan's request for prior consultation on U.S. operations originating from Okinawan facilities would undermine its ability to maintain regional stability in the Western Pacific.[21] The Nixon-Sato communiqué of 1969 returned Okinawa to Japanese sovereignty on 15 May 1972 and marked the end the post-war occupation of Japan. In the communiqué, the Japanese government acknowledged that the security of Japan depended on stability in the Western Pacific and that the reversion of Okinawa should "not hinder the effective discharge of the international obligation by the United States for the defense of countries in the Far East including Japan."[22] This document marked an important milestone in the history of the alliance as Japan formally acknowledged and accepted a greater share of responsibility for the maintenance of regional stability in the Western Pacific.[23]

During the Cold War, the U.S. viewed the alliance with Japan as critical to its strategy of the containment of communism in the Western Pacific. This objective dominated U.S. foreign policy for over four decades and influenced the evolution of and gave greater relevance to the U.S.-Japan security alliance. Primarily as a result of the Soviet Union's military build up during much of the 1970s,[24] the Carter administration adopted the 1978 Guidelines for Defense Cooperation. These guidelines allowed for joint military operations based on the functional integration of operations between the SDF and forward-deployed U.S. forces.[25] However, within the constraints of the Japanese constitution, these activities were restricted to contingencies concerned with the defense of Japan. The 1978 Guidelines for Defense Cooperation were nonetheless a significant step in the transition toward a less lopsided alliance since, for the first time, joint military planning was authorized as it established the allocation of military roles and missions.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, U.S. foreign policy focused on the developments in Central and Eastern Europe and the strengthening of NATO. [26] The Cold War standoff between the two superpowers that came to define the U.S.-Japan security alliance no longer existed, placing the relevance of the alliance into question. Even though the U.S. maintained significant interests in the Asia-Pacific region, relations between the U.S., Japan, and other Asian nations were not at the forefront of U.S. foreign policy concerns. The Gulf War of 1990-1991 was an important turning point for the alliance. Japan recognized Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the ensuing Gulf War as not only a threat to stability in the Middle East, but also as a threat to Japan's national interests given its dependence on the Middle East and Persian Gulf for 80 percent of its oil consumption.[27] Japan moved to support the U.S.-led coalition to repel Iraq from Kuwait, but was severely constrained by its constitution and an inability to win popular support for deploying Japanese troops on limited noncombatant missions.[28] Japan did implement economic sanctions and contributed 13 billion dollars [29] to coalition forces, but these generous economic contributions were overshadowed, from the perspective of both the overall international community and the United States, by a failure to provide troops on the ground. As a result, the U.S. questioned Japan's status as a reliable ally and Japan was forced to examine its security policy dominated by a self-centered pacifism.[30]

The Gulf War and Japan's contribution to the effort generated significant bilateral tensions within the context of the U.S.-Japan security alliance. Japan realized that the constraints imposed by domestic politics over the employment of the SDF remained a significant obstacle to expanding joint operations with the United States.[31] If domestic politics were to prevent activation of the SDF for a conflict on the Korean peninsula, the alliance could be strained to the point of failure.[32] These considerations on the part of the Japanese government served as a catalyst for new legislation in 1992, the Peacekeeping Law, which authorized deployment of the SDF abroad for noncombatant, United Nations-mandated peacekeeping operations.[33] The first of such peacekeeping missions was deployed to Cambodia, followed in later years by other missions to Mozambique, Somalia, Rwanda, the Golan Heights, and East Timor. These deployments and Japan's increased engagement with the international community added "an important new dimension to Japan's international role and to the alliance."[34]

North Korea became the focus of the Asia-Pacific region in 1993 and 1994 when it was determined that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was covertly developing a nuclear weapon capability. Tension in the region grew as the governments of the United States, Japan, and South Korea moved to prevent North Korea from posing such a significant threat to regional stability. In the event of a military confrontation with North Korea, the Clinton administration

queried Japan on the level of support the United States could expect from the Japanese government and the Self-Defense Force.[35] Again, the constitution and other legislation did not authorize the SDF to participate in joint military operations with the U.S.[36] Short of military operations; the 1994 Geneva Agreed Framework froze North Korea's plutonium production and eased heightened tensions in the region. But once again Japan was reminded that its national security depended on the regional stability of the Western Pacific and that potential threats were emerging to destabilize the region. Therefore, Japan acted to strengthen its alliance with the United States and increase its capability to respond to future crises.[37]

Following the North Korean nuclear weapon and the Taiwan Strait missile crises, the 1996 Clinton-Hashimoto security declaration was the first step toward further strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance and in increasing Japan's capability to respond in time of crisis. The declaration "set forth a post-Cold War rationale for the alliance, restored collaborative tone to the relationship after the trade wars of the early 1990s, and set the stage for the 1997 revision to the Guidelines for Defense Cooperation."[38] The 1997 revision of the Guidelines for Defense Cooperation, originally drafted in 1978, authorized the Japanese Self-Defense Force to provide rear-area support to U.S. forces in response to regional crisis. Although still limited to non-combative roles in the defense of Japan, the 1997 revision of the guidelines was a "significant departure from Japan's passive posture of the past."[39]

The most recent milestone and potentially the most significant to date in the evolutionary development toward a more balanced U.S.-Japan security alliance was catalyzed by the September 11th terrorist attacks. Like much of the international community, Japan quickly rallied to support the U.S.-led coalition against terrorism. Following the attacks, Japan passed controversial legislation authorizing the deployment of supply and other naval vessels to the Indian Ocean to provide rear-area support for U.S. forces in Afghanistan and humanitarian relief to displaced refugees. The overseas deployment of Japanese SDF in noncombatant roles supporting U.S. military operations marked the first such military operations since the formation of the SDF in 1954.[40] As the war against terrorism expanded to include military operations in Iraq, Japan once again demonstrated its resolve by deploying SDF to Iraq in support of reconstruction and humanitarian efforts.

In the September 2002 National Security Strategy, President Bush recognized Japan's timely and "unprecedented levels of military logistical support"[41] for Operation Enduring Freedom. As a result of Japan's expanded role, the President acknowledged that the U.S.-Japan security alliance not only underpins regional peace and security, but is "flexible and ready to deal with new challenges."[42] The U.S. alliance with Japan has gained unprecedented

momentum since the September 11th attacks. The National Security Strategy seeks to sustain this momentum by strengthening the alliance with Japan to meet the challenge of emergent threats to security in East Asia.

Threats to Regional Security

As with many alliances, the U.S.-Japan security alliance has evolved throughout its history to remain relevant and strong. Even so, the original objectives established in the formative years of the alliance over fifty years ago have not changed and are common to both sides of this bilateral relationship. The U.S. commitment to the security alliance with Japan serves two primary objectives:

- To provide for the security of Japan.
- To ensure regional stability in the Western Pacific.

The National Security Strategy portrays the Western Pacific region as "dynamic," which is also a fitting description of the emergent challenges that threaten Japan's security and regional stability. Many potential threats to security exist and thus pose significant challenges to the security alliance. The following analysis focuses on three potential areas that present an imminent challenge to the alliance: North Korea, Taiwan, and China.

North Korea

In the long-term, it is in the best interest of the United States to encourage the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula under a democratic government participating in a global free market economy. However in the near term, North Korea presents a number of serious threats to regional stability and is therefore a vital concern of the U.S.-Japan security alliance. The National Security Strategy indicates that North Korea is the world's top supplier of ballistic missile technology to terrorist organizations and is developing an arsenal of WMD.[43] In support of the war on terror and to maintain Asia-Pacific regional stability, the United States has the following national interests at stake on the Korean peninsula:

- Dismantle North Korea's nuclear weapon capability.
- Encourage abandonment of long-range missile program with U.S. strike capability.
- Prevent proliferation of WMD technology to rogue states and terrorists.
- Stop North Korean support for terrorism.[44]

The successful attainment of these vital national interests will only be achieved through patient diplomatic negotiations. Until the diplomatic, economic, and financial elements of power are effective, the U.S. forces forward deployed to South Korea and Japan must deter aggression and prevent escalation of the crisis. The U.S. military presence also serves as a prerequisite

for successful North-South negotiations and bolsters South Korea's position at the bargaining table.[45] As such, the U.S.-Japan alliance plays a vital role in "maintaining peace and deterring aggression on the Korean peninsula."[46]

Taiwan

With contentious issues such as nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, the Korean peninsula poses the greatest threat to regional stability, Japan's security, and the U.S.-Japan alliance. However, a conflict in the Taiwan Strait follows a close second as a potential threat to stability in East Asia. Taiwan has adopted a democratic government, actively participates in the free market economy, and seeks to maintain its national identity. Beijing, on the other hand, refers to Taiwan as a "renegade province,"[47] strongly opposes Taipei's independence, and seeks to reunite Taiwan with mainland China. U.S. foreign policy support of a 'one China' policy attempts to balance competing strategic objectives. On the one hand, the United States recognizes Beijing as the legitimate government of all China and assures the People's Republic of China (PRC) leadership that the U.S. will not recognize a Taiwanese declaration of independence.[48] On the other hand, the United States maintains robust political, military, and economic relations with Taiwan including an expanding foreign military sales program supplying destroyers, diesel submarines, anti-submarine aircraft, and other equipment.[49] In February of 2005, Japan and the U.S. declared in a joint agreement that Taiwan is a mutual security concern and, as such, the alliance seeks to achieve the following strategic interests related to Taiwan:

- Deter cross-strait conflict between mainland China and Taiwan.
- Avoid unnecessary provocation of China.
- Preserve Taiwan's free market economy.[50]

The governments of the United States and Japan support the peaceful reunification of Taiwan and China implemented through a democratic and mutually agreed upon process. In the long run, reaching this goal will require patience and crafty diplomacy in order to balance competing national interests and to dissuade unilateral solutions, avoid potential conflict, and continue robust trade and economic ties with both China and Taiwan. Recent history has experienced fluctuating degrees of interaction between China and Taiwan. Since 2001, promising political developments such as Taiwan's relaxed restrictions on working visas for PRC professionals, travel, direct transport, commerce, and postal exchanges with the mainland have been seen as positive steps towards improved cross-strait relations.[51] However, thoughts of improved relations were quickly replaced by fears of increased cross-strait tensions on 14

March 2005 when the PRC passed the Anti-Secession Law that specifically authorizes the state's use of "non-peaceful means and other necessary measures to protect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity"[52] in the event that all peaceful means of reunification with Taiwan are exhausted.

As official political relations between China and Taiwan ebb and flow, unofficial contacts and economic ties between the two countries have experienced a significant and steady increase. The exchange of information, expertise, and ideas between Taiwanese and Chinese scholars, professionals, and entrepreneurs from various fields is viewed by many as a viable alternative for promoting PRC-Taiwan dialogue.[53] Increased economic ties are evident in the fact that Taiwanese businesses are increasingly invested in the Chinese economy and that in 2004 China replaced the United States as Taiwan's primary trading partner.[54] The challenge for the U.S.-Japan security alliance is to encourage continued PRC-Taiwan dialogue and strengthening economic and financial interdependence in pursuit of a process which contributes to reduced tensions and a peaceful, long-term resolution of outstanding differences.

The cross-strait balance of military power has shifted in favor of the PRC as Beijing has amassed a deterrent force of an estimated 600 missiles in south China.[55] However, many analysts believe that China can ill-afford open hostilities to force the reunification of Taiwan due to the prohibitively expensive diplomatic, political, and economic costs associated.[56] China requires regional and international stability to attract and maintain foreign investment in order to sustain continued economic development.[57] As China transforms from an isolated nation to one of increasing interconnectedness and interdependence, maintaining regional and international stability becomes a critical national interest. Therefore, as China's economy continues to expand, forceful reunification of Taiwan becomes less of a viable option for Beijing. However, as long as "Beijing continues to see the threat and possible use of force as integral to its policy of dissuading Taiwan from pursuing independence,"[58] the U.S.-Japan security alliance and the U.S. military presence in Japan and throughout Asia serve to maintain the balance of military power in the region and are a deterrent force against that Chinese military threat.

China

In addition to the threat of a potential conflict over Taiwan, China's ascension on the horizon of the Western Pacific to military prominence challenges the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region and threatens to destabilize regional security. China's economy has experienced explosive growth over the last decade and for Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea, China has displaced the United States as their primary trading partner.[59] As discussed

previously, China's open economy has resulted in a greater interdependency with its trading partners and thus has developed a reliance on stability and security for continued growth. In that sense, China's economic rise is a stabilizing force, however China's economic prosperity has benefited a potentially destabilizing force - the modernization of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). For the past 15 years, China has programmed double-digit annual increases in defense expenditures.[60] In 2005 that trend continued as China increased its defense budget by 12.6 percent to $29.9 billion dollars – double the figure for 2000.[61] The immediate intent of China's defense spending is to prevent Taiwan's independence, counter third-party intervention in a cross-strait crisis, and compel Taiwan to negotiate a settlement on Beijing's terms.[62] However, over time, China's increased military "capabilities could pose a credible threat to other modern militaries operating in the region,"[63] disrupting the current balance of military power and potentially destabilizing regional security.

In the near term, it is in the best interest of the United States and Japan to avoid a direct military conflict with China. In the long term, the United States and Japan support "the emergence of a strong, peaceful, and prosperous China."[64] However, as the alliance welcomes China into the global community, it also needs to ensure that China's rise to power does not jeopardize the vital strategic and economic interests protected by the U.S.-Japan security alliance.[65] The former Secretary of State Colin Powell stated that "China is not an enemy and our challenge is to keep it that way."[66] As such, the United States and Japan will pursue a diplomatic strategy of engagement with China, promoting free trade and investment, to emphasize common interests in combating terror, pursuing stability on the Korean peninsula, and resolving health and environmental concerns.

The Risks

Throughout the course of the alliance, the United States has encouraged Japan to develop a greater military capability in order to assume a more proactive role in its self-defense and maintaining regional stability. However, an increased military capability is a delicate issue both domestically within Japan and among its Asian neighbors. A culture of anti-militarism has gained prominence within the Japan's general population and among its established elites for fear that the Japanese democracy does not have the ability to control a stronger and more proactive military.[67] As highlighted previously, domestic opposition to Japanese support of U.S. military operations has threatened public support for the alliance. In addition, a more capable Japanese military would be opposed by many Asia-Pacific countries with lasting memories of pre-war Japan including China and North Korea who have already expressed concern over the

intentions of the U.S.-Japan security alliance and Japan's increased military capability. Therefore, the United States should continue to pursue a greater military role for Japan with caution and avoid inadvertently making the alliance a threat to the stability it seeks to sustain.

North Korean ballistic missiles and WMD pose the greatest threat to regional security in the near term and, as such, represent the greatest risk to the alliance with Japan. Failure of the diplomatic strategy of containment and engagement will result in the expansion of North Korea's nuclear arsenal and an increased ballistic missile threat to Japan and the continental U.S. Either of these issues threatens regional stability and is very much contrary to U.S. national security interests. If the U.S. military presence on the Korean peninsula and Japan fails to deter North Korean aggression and the crisis escalates, U.S. forces will be needed to halt the southern advance and mount a counterattack to expel North Korean forces. The destabilizing effects of these issues to regional security, the offensive threat to the security of both the United States and Japan, and the potential military confrontation with North Korea will test the U.S.-Japan security alliance in an unprecedented manner.

With regard to Taiwan, America's policy of "strategic ambiguity" finds itself between the proverbial rock and a hard place. On the one hand, the United States maintains extensive political, diplomatic, economic, and military ties with Taiwan. The Bush administration has hosted visits from Taiwanese government officials and maintains a substantial foreign military sales program while American markets consume 25 percent of Taiwan's exports.[68] The net effect of this interaction provides Taiwan an identity and increases its stature in the international community.[69] On the other hand, the U.S. recognizes Beijing as the legitimate government of all China and its "one China" policy. Even though the U.S. military sales assist Taiwan in countering Beijing's cross-strait military buildup, American foreign policy wishes to avoid conflict with China and instead desires to play an active role in its peaceful ascension to a position of global prominence. Unfortunately, current U.S. policy does not preclude the potential for such a conflict. And similar to the North Korean scenario, an armed conflict over Taiwan would test the resolve of the U.S.-Japan security alliance. To avoid a potential mortal wound to the alliance over Taiwan, it is critical that each nation voice their expectations and concerns so that roles and levels of support are clearly defined prior to conflict escalation.[70]

As China continues on a path toward economic, political, and military dominance of East Asia, synchronized U.S. and Japanese diplomatic relations with China will play a pivotal role in maintaining stability, peace, and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. At this point, a diplomatic strategy to promote common interests and resolve differences is undoubtedly the most prudent approach to avoiding direct military conflict with China. During a visit to Shanghai in April 2004,

Vice President Cheney stated that "the areas of agreement [between the United States and the PRC] are far greater than those areas where we disagree."[71] U.S. forward-deployed troops in Japan serve as a deterrent to China's threat of forcible reunification of Taiwan. China's significantly increased military spending over the last decade threatens U.S. military dominance in East Asia. An attempt by the U.S. to sustain military dominance through an increased presence and greater dedication of resources would be difficult considering the funding and number of military personnel currently dedicated to the war on terror. Already skeptical of the U.S. presence in East Asia, an attempt to match China's increasing military capability could provoke Beijing into the confrontation the alliance is attempting to avoid.

Domestic Discontent

North Korea, Taiwan, and China represent significant threats to regional peace and security in the Western Pacific and therefore portray difficult challenges for the U.S.-Japan security alliance. However, the alliance faces considerable challenges on the domestic front as well. Those among the American public who criticize of the alliance hold the perception that Japan receives a guarantee of defense and security without obligation to the associated risks or costs.[72] On the other side of the Pacific, Japanese critics view the alliance as the avenue through which the U.S. pressures Japan to become entangled in conflicts that do not necessarily serve its national interests.[73] The key to strengthening the relationship for the long term is winning domestic support for a reconfigured alliance on both sides of the Pacific. It is important that the American public understand the value of a reconfigured alliance to U.S. national interests. Gaining Japanese public support for a more proactive role will face significant cultural, legislative, and constitutional hurdles – specifically eliminating the restrictions imposed by Article 9 of the constitution. Ironically, even though Japan more fully recognizes the values and benefits of the U.S.-Japan security alliance, the Japanese population is growing more reluctant to bear the burden of host nation support for forward-deployed U.S. forces.[74] Therefore, mustering support for a more proactive Japanese role may prove difficult.

The United States, for its contribution to the security alliance, provides a nuclear umbrella of strategic deterrence, an offensive power projection capability, a global intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capability, and a command and control infrastructure.[75] Japan provides financial host nation support and bases for forward-deployed U.S. troops. This comparison is not meant to diminish Japan's contribution to the security alliance. U.S. presence facilitated by the Japanese bases is vital to defending Japan against aggression, maintaining Asia-Pacific regional stability, and securing U.S. national interests in the Western Pacific and

across the globe.[76] Therefore, the bases are of critical strategic importance to the United States and give great significance to Japan's contribution as an alliance partner.[77] However, there is a growing discontent among the Japanese population for the burden associated with providing host nation support and bases for American troops.[78]

Much of Japan's discontent for supporting U.S. forces in Japan originates from local issues within the cities and prefectures hosting U.S. bases. The local concerns over safety, noise, pollution, and monetary compensation have gained prominence in the national news media spotlight, have expanded in political influence, and have become contentious issues to be addressed by the Japanese and U.S. governments for the continued health of the alliance. U.S. air bases located in Japan such as Misawa Air Base, Naval Air Facility Atsugi, Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma, MCAS Iwakuni, and Kadena Air Base are primary sources of the safety and noise concerns. Just as encroachment from development threatens bases in the United States, many U.S. air facilities in Japan now share a common fence with Japanese homes, businesses, schools, and hospitals. In Atsugi, for example, Field Carrier Landing Practice (FCLP) is an operational requirement for U.S. Navy pilots in preparation for conducting flight operations on the aircraft carrier, USS KITTY HAWK (CV-63). FCLPs require sustained low-altitude flight in close proximity to the field generating significant noise and safety concerns for the Japanese citizens who now work and reside under the landing pattern. These noise and safety concerns, combined with vigorous reactions to a number of operational mishaps and criminal activities perpetuated by U.S. servicemen, have caused local Japanese governments to voice strong opposition to the presence of U.S. forces in Japan.

The Japanese prefecture of Okinawa has become the epicenter of political backlash against Japan's support for forward-deployed U.S. forces. Okinawa has sought the elimination of all U.S. presence on the island since 1995.[79] Compared to other prefectures, Okinawans feel as though they bear a disproportionate share of the burden due to the fact that Okinawa hosts the largest number and the densest population of U.S. troops in Japan.[80] This argument gained considerable clout and national recognition in September 1995 following the rape of a 12-year old Okinawan schoolgirl by three American servicemen. As a result, U.S. base consolidation in Okinawa became a priority issue for the alliance. To appease the Okinawan citizens, in April 1996 the Clinton administration offered to return MCAS Futenma to sovereign Japan if an equivalent replacement facility was built elsewhere on Okinawa[81] – an issue that has yet to be resolved a decade later. "[T]he Okinawan bases are significant enough, both politically and with respect to U.S. military capabilities concentrated there, to affect the much broader question of the future of American presence."[82] The burden associated with hosting U.S. forces in Japan

and the call by Japanese opposition party leaders to pursue an alliance without a U.S. presence has made it difficult for the bilateral partners to address important issues in the security relationship.[83] Local Japanese discontent, if not addressed, has the potential to paralyze the alliance - the mechanism that has defined diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Japan for over 50 years.

Accelerating the Evolution

Since October 2004, a number of sweeping changes that have the potential to greatly accelerate the evolution of the security alliance have been initiated by Japan and the United States in response to political, economic, and military developments in the Western Pacific. Japan published two documents, the Araki Commission report and the National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG), that established the foundation for "continuing efforts to modernize Japan's national security policy and its national security infrastructure"[84] and the basic principles for strengthening the alliance. Supported by pro-alliance administrations in Japan and the U.S. alike, the Security Consultative Committee (SCC) produced a document in February 2005 demonstrating the common strategic objectives and national interests at the core of the alliance and another in October 2005 announcing initiatives that will transform the alliance into the most significant pillar of peace and security in the region for the 21 st Century.

The Araki Commission Report, October 2004

On 4 October 2004, the Japanese Prime Minister's Council on Security and Defense Capabilities, the Araki Commission, published its assessment of the security environment and outlined an appropriate national security strategy to respond to emergent threats.[85] The report called for strengthening the alliance with the United States and proposed a more external focus for its national security strategy. Its approach to strengthening the alliance and ensuring its longevity included bolstering the credibility of the alliance with the Japanese population to balance domestic concerns with national security objectives. To further strengthen the alliance, the report underlined the need for closer consultation and cooperation with the United States to increase reliability of U.S.-Japan joint operations during times of crisis.[86] Abandoning Japan's passive self-defense posture prevalent throughout the Cold War, the Commission called for a strategy which is more flexible and focused on regional and global issues that reflect Japan's national security interests.[87] That flexibility included a more versatile SDF with an expanded repertoire of roles and mission capabilities. And to replace ad-hoc legislation authorizing employment of the SDF during times of crisis, the report stressed the need for streamlined policy mechanisms to implement the integrated security strategy. [88]

To outside observers, including those in the U.S., the Araki Commission report seemed unremarkable.[89] However, the report generated considerable debate in Japan. The liberal left expressed concern about the increasing integration between U.S. and Japanese military forces as the backbone of Japan's emerging national security policy.[90] Conservatives supported the report and appreciated its pragmatic approach to Japan's security issues, but were disappointed that specific threats such as China and North Korea were not addressed.[91] An editorial by Yuki Tatsumi[92] that appeared in *The Japan Times* on 23 October 2004 captured the arguments of both sides of the political spectrum. Tatsumi applauded the Araki report as the first "to clearly articulate the goals of Japan's national security policy," "the clearest statement yet on how Japan seeks to strengthen the U.S.-Japan alliance," and "noteworthy because it touches upon issues that were considered "taboo" in past discussions of Japanese security policy."[93] However, the author also expressed concern for the report's limitations on issues not addressed. Echoing concerns from the left, Tatsumi pointed out that the report centered almost exclusively on the U.S.-Japan alliance and neglected any cooperative effort with Asia-Pacific regional partners as a critical element of Japan's national security strategy.[94] An issue of concern to Japanese domestic politics and not addressed by the commission is the potential financial implications of Japan's enhancements of the SDF.[95] And finally, Tatsumi stated that the Araki report failed to address Japan's right of collective self-defense and the constitutional revision required to codify that concept.[96]

National Defense Program Guidelines, December 2004

The initiatives and objectives established in the Araki Commission report were echoed in Japan's follow-on National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) released in December 2004. Previous versions of the NDPG, released in 1976 and 1995, established formal justification for Japan Defense Agency's (JDA) quantitative force structure development goals.[97] In sharp contrast to the previous editions, the 2004 publication boldly established the basic principles for strengthening the U.S.-Japan security alliance. The NDPG called for a more efficient decision making process enhancing Japan's capability to respond in time of crisis, enabling closer cooperation, and making joint operations with the U.S. possible.[98] Since the end of the Cold War, the roles and missions assigned to the SDF have expanded as have the geographic areas to which it deploys requiring a more capable and flexible military component. The emphasis in the NDPG for a more proactive SDF role in the international security environment reflects Japan's acceptance that its security depends on regional stability and that regional stability depends on global security.[99] Ambassador Rust M. Deming[100] indicated that the Araki

Commission report and the 2004 NDPG signaled "the clear intent of Japan to expand both the vertical integration and the horizontal application of the alliance."[101]

However, in Japan the 2004 NDPG received substantial criticism from opposition party members, defenses experts, and the media. Leadership of the opposition Democratic Party of Japan criticized the new NDPG as reflecting "a patchwork of bureaucratic compromises that did not present any guiding philosophy from which to approach Japan's overall defense strategy."[102] While defense analysts appreciated the explicit mention of China, North Korea, and terrorism as security issues, they were concerned that the new NDPG lacked "convincing arguments to support the restructuring of Japan's military," "a roadmap for strengthening joint operations," and a rapid response strategy for dealing with terrorism.[103] Reaction to the 2004 NDPG from the Japanese news media was divided along political lines. Conservative publications were generally supportive of the new defense guidelines, while the liberal media again criticized the increasing integration between U.S. and Japanese military strategies and expressed concern that the new defense policy signaled an abandonment of Japan's pacifist ideals.[104]

Security Consultative Committee Joint Statement, February 2005

Building on the momentum of Japan's two landmark national security strategy documents, the Araki Commission report and the 2004 NDPG, the Security Consultative Committee[105] (SCC) issued a joint statement on 19 February 2005 that accomplished the unprecedented and significant task of developing common regional and global strategic objectives for the bilateral partners. The list of common goals was comprehensive and included such regional concerns as the peaceful unification of the Korean peninsula, resolution of issues related to North Korea's nuclear weapon and ballistic missile programs, China, and a peaceful solution to the Taiwan Strait issue.[106] Global issues addressed by the SCC statement included further consolidation of the U.S.-Japan partnership in international peace cooperation activities, stabilization of the global energy supply, eradication of terrorism, and support for Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council.[107] The joint statement acknowledged that in order to attain these objectives, the alliance needs to develop and improve on current capabilities and, additionally, needs to realign the two governments' forces to increase inoperability and to enable an efficiently coordinated response to regional and global crises. By articulating its common objectives, the SCC set a course for the future of the alliance and sustained the momentum for developing a stronger U.S.-Japan security alliance.

Whether in support of or in opposition to the SCC joint statement or the direction it suggested for the future development of the alliance, few questioned its historical

significance.[108] The statement is significant due to the fact that, for the first time, the alliance established common strategic goals to include Taiwan and China as security concerns. Domestic media outlets in the U.S. and Japan focused on China's immediate reaction to the joint statement as Beijing denounced the statement "as constituting interference in China's internal affairs."[109] Within Japan's ruling LDP, there was virtually no criticism from either pro-China or pro-Taiwan groups.[110] Surprisingly, the same was true for the Democratic Party of Japan, the business community including those heavily invested in China and Taiwan, and other agencies of the Japanese government.[111]

> The readiness of the Government of Japan to insert this clause into the Joint Statement combined with the lack of criticism from virtually any political, economic, or bureaucratic element in Japan are a validation … that now is the time for Japan to reassert the importance of security in the Taiwan Strait to Japan's own security… [112]

U.S.-Japan Alliance: Transformation and Realignment for the Future, October 2005

The Araki Commission report and the 2004 NDPG initiated the process and built momentum for the greatly accelerated evolution of the U.S.-Japan security alliance by reconfirming the alliance as the bedrock for Japan's national security strategy and by identifying critical shortfalls threatening the alliance's capability to adequately respond to the challenges in an ever-changing security environment. One of the critical shortfalls that constrained the alliance was the absence of a formal articulation of common purpose. That void was filled by the SCC's joint statement that expressed the national security interests shared by Japan and the United States and, as such, established an overarching strategic vision for the future of the alliance. On 29 October 2005, the SCC published a second document, *U.S.-Japan Alliance: Transformation and Realignment for the Future* , which possessed the potential to transform the alliance into an equal and indispensable partnership serving as the foundation of Japanese security, Asia-Pacific regional stability, and global influence well into the 21st Century. The SCC, proposing the most aggressive change to the alliance structure since its inception in 1951, intended to strengthen the alliance by enhancing its "capability to meet new threats and diverse contingencies"[113] while reducing the burden of supporting U.S. bases and facilities on local Japanese communities.

To strengthen the alliance and enhance its response capability, the SCC reexamined the roles, missions, and capabilities of the bilateral forces concentrating on the defense of Japan, regional stability, and the international security environment. The reexamination was based on several assumptions that underpin the continued relevance of the U.S.-Japan security alliance.

At its core, bilateral defense cooperation is vital to the security of Japan and regional stability. Garnering the benefits of an enhanced defense posture as set forth in the 2004 NDPG, Japan will play a more proactive role in providing for its self-defense and in "responding to situations in areas surrounding Japan."[114] U.S. forces, including robust strike and nuclear deterrence capabilities, are an essential compliment to Japan's defense capabilities and, therefore, will continue to forward-deploy forces to Japanese bases and facilities. Japan will continue to provide host nation support and, together with the United States government, will work with local communities to ensure stable support for the alliance. Finally, the SCC acknowledged that "bilateral cooperation in improving the international security environment to achieve regional and global common strategic objectives has become an important element of the alliance."[115]

Based on these assumptions concerning roles, missions, and capabilities, the October 2005 SCC document articulated several steps essential in transforming the alliance to one capable of maintaining peace and security in the dynamic Asia-Pacific threat environment. Close and continuous policy and operational coordination at every level of government is essential to improving the alliance's response capability and "to dissuade destabilizing military build-ups" (China), "to deter aggression" (North Korea), and "to respond to diverse security challenges"[116] (North Korea, Taiwan, and China). Reflecting Japan's legislation to deal with contingencies, advanced bilateral planning for specific contingencies, tested through joint exercises, will eliminate policy ambiguities that encumbered the alliance during previous crises. Overcoming security concerns of shared classified material, information sharing, and intelligence cooperation will be improved so that the alliance partners contribute to integrated tactical, operational, and strategic pictures developing a unified situational awareness. Enabled by a joint situational awareness, operational cooperation will be greatly enhanced through improved interoperability, expanded bilateral training and exercise opportunities, and additional shared use facilities by U.S. and Japanese forces.

In examining the potential for force posture realignment of U.S. forces in Japan, the SCC intended to strike an important balance between maintaining critical operational capabilities and reducing the burden on local Japanese communities. The proposed recommendations for realignment are significant, far reaching, and comprehensive – addressing many contentious issues of concern to the Japanese population. The SCC emphasized the criticality of combined command and control functions, essential to ensuring constant connectivity, coordination, and interoperability, through recommendations to (1) establish a bilateral and joint operations coordination center at Yokota Air Base; (2) establish a Ground SDF Central Readiness Force Command collocated with a modernized U.S. Army Japan's command structure at Camp Zama;

and (3) collocate Japan's Air Defense Command with the U.S. 5th Air Force headquarters at Yokota Air Base.[117] The greatly enhanced combined command and control infrastructure, along with the deployment of an improved ballistic missile defense capability, demonstrates an elevated level of cooperation and cohesiveness between the alliance partners in the defense of Japan and in pursuit of common strategic objectives.

Okinawa, the source of much domestic discontent concerning its support for U.S. forces, was the primary focus of the force structure realignment recommendations. With implementation schedules due no later than March 2006, the SCC intends to "substantially reduce burdens in Okinawa"[118] by addressing issues efficiently and effectively. Protracting without resolution as a highly-contentious issue since 1996, the SCC proposed to accelerate the relocation of MCAS Futenma. However, it also declared that Futenma's rotary wing squadrons are a critical alliance capability and, therefore, the base will not be returned until an equivalent replacement facility is constructed elsewhere on the Okinawa prefecture. A second proposal involves the relocation of III Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF) headquarters to Guam which includes a force reduction of 7,000 Marines and their dependents from Okinawa. Both of these initiatives, combined with further consolidation of Marine forces remaining, will facilitate the return of significant land area and reduce the U.S. footprint in Okinawa.

Release of the *U.S.-Japan Alliance: Transformation and Realignment for the Future* in October 2005 generated extensive media coverage and public reaction throughout Japan. A liberal newspaper, *Asahi*, published an editorial that was generally supportive but cautioned that integration of the SDF with U.S. military forces can not lead to Japan's unquestioning participation in U.S. military strategy.[119] "Japan must decide on its own – on the basis of its own strategy – how far it should cooperate with the United States."[120] An editorial in *Yomiuri*, a conservative newspaper, stated that the Government of Japan will need to demonstrate strong political leadership to realize the new alliance agreement that "confirmed specific arrangements for cooperation in responding to situations in areas near Japan and in improving the international security environment." However, the editorial questioned Japan's ability to integrate the SDF with U.S. forces as long as it maintains its current interpretation of the constitution. "To make the alliance truly effective, it is necessary to change the interpretation to allow Japan to exercise the right to collective defense."[121]

Criticism from the local communities impacted by the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan dominated the news media. Citing an increased burden on the local community, the Kanagawa governor criticized the plan to upgrade the U.S. Army Japan's headquarters at Camp Zama to a joint task force-capable command.[122] The Kanagawa governor, along with the mayor of

Yokosuka, condemned the decision to replace the conventionally-powered USS KITTY HAWK (CV-63) with a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier in 2008 due to safety concerns of maintaining a nuclear reactor in the Yokosuka shipyard.[123] The Yamaguchi governor and Iwakuni mayor joined forces to demonstrate their strong opposition to transferring KITTY HAWK's airwing from Atsugi to Iwakuni stating that the relocation will simply "shift the problem" of aircraft noise from one local community to another.[124] However, no other local outcry to the new U.S. force realignment agreement captured the national news media spotlight as did the relocation plan for MCAS Futenma within Okinawa. The Okinawa governor, backed by strong local support, rejected the Futenma relocation plan as "totally unacceptable."[125] An editorial in *Nikkei*, an even more conservative paper than *Yomiuri*, summarized the importance of gaining local support for the realignment plan by stating that: "Essential in implementing the agreement will be the work of winning the understanding of the local communities that bear the burden of the bases, thereby striving to raise the effectiveness of the Japan-U.S. alliance."[126]

Japanese Constitutional Revision

The historic proposals presented in the previous section define the strategic vision for the alliance and identify critical steps required to strengthen the alliance for the challenges ahead. Wholesale implementation of these initiatives would bolster the bilateral relationship from a client-patron association to one of equal partnership. Japan's elevated position of prominence aside the United States reflects its shared strategic interests and the vital importance of maintaining regional and international stability in pursuit of those goals. However, implementation of the alliance's new grand strategy requires a revision of Japan's pacifist constitution, specifically Article 9 that restricts its ability to stand up a military and to conduct any operation other than in defense of the homeland. In support of this claim, Balbina Y. Hwang[127] states that "[a]s long as Japan continues to interpret Article 9 as prohibiting collective self-defense actions, especially with the United States, it impedes Japan's ability to participate fully in regional and global operations and missions."[128] On 22 November 2005, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) addressed those concerns by unveiling the proposed constitutional revision that would eliminate restrictions on forming a military, allow the SDF to assume a more assertive international role, and enable Japan to fulfill its commitment as a reliable and responsible security partner with the U.S.[129]

The Constitution of Japan, drafted by U.S. occupation forces and adopted by Japan following World War II on 3 May 1947, has never been amended. Even though the LDP has sought to replace the U.S.-imposed constitution for over fifty years, this proposal represents the

first formal petition for modification.[130] Ratification of the new constitution requires at least a two-thirds vote in the Lower House and Upper House of the Diet – Japan's elected parliament. Following parliamentary approval, the new constitution requires a majority vote by the Japanese people in a national referendum.[131] Political and public support for constitutional revision appears strong. In May 2004, 545 members of the Japanese Diet were polled and 78 percent favored revising the constitution and only 14 percent opposed such action.[132] In January 2005, a public opinion poll conducted by Nihon Hoso Kyokai (NHK) indicated that 61.9 percent of those surveyed favored constitutional revision and 17 percent were opposed.[133] However, support for specific revision of Article 9 is not as evident. The aforementioned polling of 545 Diet members resulted in 57 percent favoring changes to "expressly stipulate the maintenance of military capability," while 29 percent were opposed to revision of Article 9.[134] The NHK survey indicated that the Japanese public is divided on the issue of revising Article 9, with 39.4 percent in favor of revision and 39.0 percent opposed.[135] Gaining popular support for Article 9 revision – a vote for a more proactive Japan regionally and globally; a vote for a stronger alliance and continued host nation support – presents a potential challenge to the future of the alliance and to the national security strategies for the U.S. and Japan alike.

Recommendations

The security alliance has served as the cornerstone of U.S.-Japan diplomatic relations for over five decades and the strategic location of U.S. forces in Japan is critical to protecting shared economic, diplomatic, and political interests in the Asia-Pacific region. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the United States and Japan to engage in the reconfiguration of the alliance to produce a more robust, flexible, and symmetric bilateral security arrangement that is capable of securing common national interests well into the 21st Century. Recent proposals for alliance transformation, realignment of U.S. forces, and Japanese constitutional revision indicate that the United States and Japan have taken a significant leap towards securing that future. Application of the following recommendations is required to realize the successful transformation of the alliance.

Implement SCC-Proposed Transformational Changes

The U.S.-Japan security alliance needs to be reconfigured so that the bilateral partners participate in a more symmetric relationship. The end product of the transformation is a fully-functioning alliance in which each nation assumes equal roles and balanced distribution of responsibilities in pursuit of shared national strategic interests. As new and complex security threats emerge at an ever increasing rate, the United States, Japan, and the alliance can no

longer afford to rely on incremental growth spurred by the latest crisis. The Japanese government currently lacks the policy mechanisms needed to execute timely and effective security cooperation with the U.S. in response to the rapidly evolving threat environment. Wholesale implementation of the proposed transformation, U.S. force structure realignments, and Japanese constitutional revision is critical in determining the future relevance of the alliance.

The key to a stronger alliance is the successful execution of the transformation as proposed by the SCC. A successful transformation depends on a more robust Japanese military posture, implementation of flexible Japanese policy mechanisms to facilitate a more reliable security cooperation with the U.S., and an elevated Japanese presence in Asia-Pacific and globally. Required changes to Japan's military posture and legislative procedures necessitate constitutional revision meeting the approval of Japan's popular vote. Unfortunately, there is a decreasing tolerance among the Japanese people for the inconveniences associated with U.S. military presence.[136] The proposed realignment of U.S. forces in Japan is intended to ease the burden of host nation support on the Japanese public and provide Tokyo the public support platform to seek constitutional revision. Following the October 2005 SCC conference, Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld summarized the U.S. perspective on these issues:

> Japan has the second largest economy on the face of the Earth. The people of Japan benefit greatly from the international system. Clearly Japan has an interest in the success of the international system. With an interest in the success of that system which benefits the Japanese people, it seems to me it is appropriate for Japan to find ways in the 21st Century that they can contribute to making the system successful.[137]

Rally Japanese Public Support

Rallying Japanese public support for a more capable and proactive SDF, constitutional revision, and continued support for U.S. forces in Japan is critical to the future of the alliance. As the intolerance for inconveniences associated with host nation support has gained significant momentum in the national political arena, it is increasingly difficult for Japanese politicians to convince their constituents that they sacrifice for the benefit of Japan's national security. [138] Therefore, it is imperative that the bilateral partners continue to work together to educate the Japanese people, especially in the cities and prefectures that host U.S. bases, that there exists an important interdependence between the alliance, the U.S. military presence in Japan, and Japan's national interests. The message to the Japanese people must emphasize that the proposed changes and military operations are necessary for Japan's national security and are not being considered to simply acquiesce bilateral security interests of the United States. The

perspective of the argument used is critical.[139] For its part, as Japan struggles with remnants of its pacifist culture, antimilitarism, and growing public discontent for support of U.S. forces, the United States must respect and formally acknowledge that reexamination of Article 9 and ratification of a new constitution is a domestic issue to be decided exclusively by the people of Japan.

Public support is sometimes best obtained when rhetoric is supported by real action. Proposed U.S. force structure realignment should help alleviate some Japanese concerns for noise, pollution, safety, and an expanding U.S. military footprint. However, Okinawa, as it has been since 1995, will continue to be the epicenter of domestic discontent over support provided to U.S. forces. The transfer of 7,000 Marines to Guam, further consolidation of the remaining forces, shared use of U.S. military installations with the SDF, and the return of substantial land tracts to Japanese sovereignty will do little to alleviate Okinawa's opposition to the proposed Futenma resolution. Since the October 2005 SCC Futenma relocation plan includes the reclamation of a portion of Oura Bay, a contentious issue in the original proposal, tensions will remain high in the Okinawa prefecture. Balancing Okinawan desires with operational capabilities will prove to be a difficult task but one of critical importance considering the deterrence, crisis response, regional stability, and international security provided for by the U.S. forces forward deployed to Okinawa.

Conclusion

The stability of the Asia-Pacific region is of critical importance to the national interests of both Japan and the United States. This stability is now challenged by new threats associated with North Korea, Taiwan, and China. The U.S.-Japan security alliance has evolved as the cornerstone of regional stability and remains the best mechanism by which the world's two leading economies can pursue overlapping national interests. Recently, the U.S. and Japanese governments have made remarkable progress toward reconfiguring the alliance. However, the materialization of a New Japan, one that assumes a more prominent role in its self-defense, regional stability, and global influence, along with full implementation of the transformational changes for the alliance, requires mustering popular support for an unprecedented revision of Japan's constitution and, more specifically, Article 9. The future of the alliance will depend upon the popular vote of the Japanese people reflecting their view of how critical the *Japan-U.S.* security alliance is to securing Japan's national interests.

Kazuyoshi Umemoto, the Deputy Director General in the Japanese Foreign Ministry's North American Affairs Bureau, astutely observed that "[t]he deterrence and capabilities of the

alliance are not measured solely by the number of U.S. forces stationed in Japan, but by the combination of political will, local support, and capability of working closely together."[140] Japan and the United States have demonstrated the political will and an unprecedented capability to work closely together. The future strength of the alliance will therefore depend on local Japanese support for the alliance and constitutional revision – with Okinawa presenting the most significant challenge in that pursuit.

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